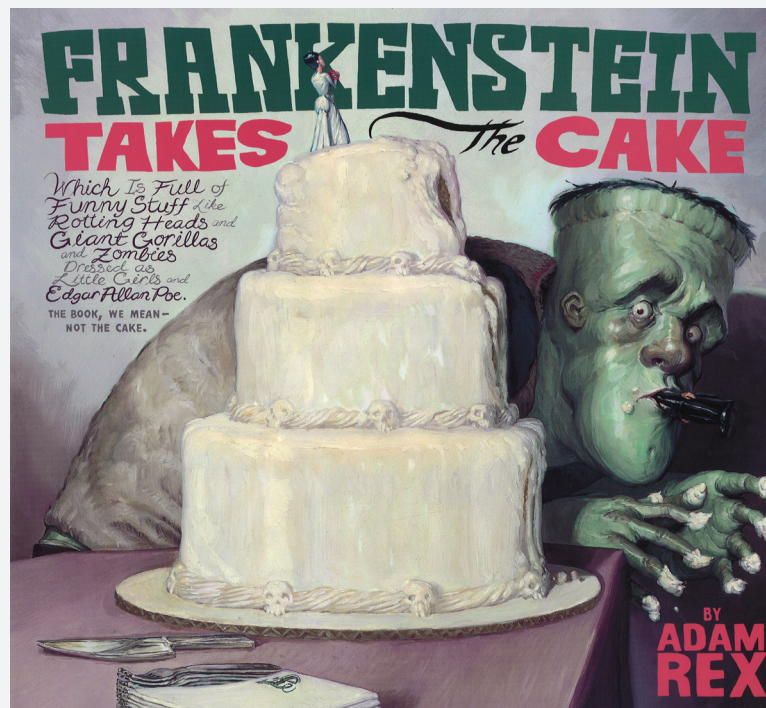


## First Opinion: Modern Poetry for Kids

Rex, Adam. *Frankenstein Takes the Cake*. New York: Harcourt Children's Books, 2009.

Shaylyn Barrie



Adam Rex creates a humorous satire on pop culture within his book *Frankenstein Takes the Cake*. Rex uses a variety of smaller storylines to ultimately build up the story of Frankenstein's marriage to his bride-to-be. Although there are a variety of things that I liked about the book, when thinking about the book as a whole, I didn't enjoy it very much. As I read, I felt as though the author was trying to do too much within a short amount of space, which might have ultimately worked against the purpose and intent behind the book.

Although I didn't enjoy the book as a whole, there were a couple of subplots that I did enjoy and would have liked to have seen the author play with a little more. Some parts that I particularly enjoyed include the story of Frankenstein getting married, the advertisement for weight loss, and the blog format of telling the story of the headless horseman. When reading this book, I thought that some of the subplots, such as the ones mentioned above, could have worked independently of one another.

Within the book, there were a lot of issues and/or topics that could have been elaborated on further to possibly enhance the overall quality of the book. For example, within the plot of the developing plans for Frankenstein's wedding, the mother of the bride mentions that she never thought that her daughter would marry someone who was green. This is a loaded statement that is never revisited. Another example within the book is the advertisement for weight loss. I found this page of the book to be particularly clever, but again, the topic was never revisited. In addition to issues not being revisited, I found that some were not even connected to the overall plot of the story, as is the case with the previous example. In thinking about this further, I think that I would have enjoyed and appreciated the book a little more if there were an overall organization principle to connect all of the ideas together. Without this, I found the book to be somewhat disjointed.

As a middle school teacher, I can see interesting uses for this book within the classroom. Although I didn't personally care for it as a pleasure reading book, I could definitely see this book being used as a tool within the classroom to inspire young readers and writers. There is a lot of information within the text for students to unpack and a handful of interesting storylines to possibly motivate students to explore further. In terms of classroom use, I can see this book being used as a tool to motivate students to write in creative ways by possibly expanding upon storylines and/or characters that have not been fully developed by the author within the book. I could also see parts of this book being used to demonstrate forms of poetry, such as the haiku, for young readers and writers.

Although the book has a children's book format, much of the humor within the book suits an older population. Due to this, it is a little difficult to recommend an appropriate age group for this book. I believe that young children would have difficulty understanding the humor and purpose of the writing within the book, but at the same time, I have difficulty pinpointing an older age group that would be drawn to this book. The content is definitely for an older audience, but I fear that the format and structure of the book works against appealing to this audience. Overall, I found Rex's technique in telling these stories to be very modern and creative, but again, I felt that he was trying to do too much in a short amount of space. This book is not one that I would recommend for pleasure reading or a book that I would recommend to a young age group, but one that I might consider exploring with students during writing instruction.

### About the Author

**Shaylyn Barrie** currently teaches seventh grade language arts at Westfield Middle School. She is currently working on her doctorate degree within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Purdue, specializing in English education.